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the gull

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Number 2

What if there's an Oil Spill?

Have you ever wondered what happens to seabirds when an oil spill occurs? Since those frantic days following the 1971 spill in San Francisco Bay when many of our members helped clean and save oiled birds, International Bird Rescue Research Center, headquartered at Berkeley's Aquatic Park, has been carrying on the work by coordinating efforts to save birds affected by oil spills.

Our general membership program for February will feature Carol Patterson, associate director of the Center. She will present a slide show illustrating the work done by the Center — largely with volunteer help.

We will meet at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, at 7:30 p.m., February 8.

There is still a need for members living in San Francisco to join the Program Committee. We meet twice a year to plan the program series. If you can help, call Ray Hasey at 548-3546.

—RAY HASEY, *Program Chairman*

1978 Oakland Christmas Count

The 79th Christmas Bird Count can be summed up in one word: rain. The Bay Area had not had a significant storm for over a month. Count Day, December 17, saw over an inch of rain fall in portions of the count circle. Fortunately the storm began to clear in the afternoon, although

for those of us caught in the field away from any cover it seemed to go on forever.

The rain slightly reduced the number of participants compared to the last few years (165 in the field in 47 parties and 44 at feeders). The most noticeable effect was the reduction in total individual birds tallied. Our total of 113,267 individuals is the lowest for at least the last six years and is almost surely a direct result of the reduced time available for birding.

On a positive note, our total of 172 species compares favorably with all of the recent counts and considering the rain during so much of the day it is outstanding. This is a direct result of the enthusiasm and dedication shown by all the participants. This total should again rank us among the top count circles.

We will be very fortunate if we lead the nation in many of the species we normally do such as Great Horned Owl, Common Flicker (Red-shafted), Steller's Jay and Rufous-sided Towhee. Species where our totals could again lead the nation include Wrentit, Brown Towhee and Golden-crowned Sparrow. But even for these it will be close.

The preparation of a count as extensive as Oakland's requires the help of a great many people. I would especially like to thank Susan Hilinski (feeder compiler), Vera Paraschak (for all her help at the GGAS office), Leora Feeney (special help in the Alameda area), Joe Morlan (rare birds) and Martha Kitchen who organized the compilation dinner and Carole Pavlic who cooked the delicious soup. Again, thanks to all who participated under less than ideal weather conditions and made the count a success.

—MALCOLM SPROUL, *Compiler*

Results: all unusual birds or unusual numbers of birds appear in bold type.

Common Loon 63, Arctic Loon 12, Red-throated Loon 2 (way down from previous years), Red-necked Grebe 1 (Erickson party, South Boat), Horned Grebe 339, Eared Grebe 56, Western Grebe 590, Pied-billed Grebe 137, Brown Pelican 98, Double-crested Cormorant 884, Brandt's Cormorant 111, Pelagic Cormorant 13, Great Blue Heron 41, Green Heron 2 (1 Johnson party, Alameda Golf Course; 1 Lewis party, Lake Temescal), Great Egret 69, Snowy Egret 165, Black-crowned Night

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Heron 25, **Whistling Swan** 1 (seen both by Bailey party, Oakland Airport, and Carus party, Utah fill), Canada Goose 1202, Mallard 810, Pintail 2302, Green-winged Teal 150, Cinnamon Teal 10, **European Wigeon** 5 (1 Feeney party, Alameda shore, 3 Alameda Golf Course, 1 Oakland Airport), American Wigeon 1391, Northern Shoveler 527, Wood Duck 1 (Whetstone party, Lafayette Reservoir), Redhead 52 (1 Palsson party, Upper San Leandro Reservoir, 1 Covell party, Lake Merritt, 50 Wihler party, Berkeley waterfront), Ring-necked Duck 100, Canvasback 1535, Greater Scaup 1133, Lesser Scaup 7497, Scaup spp. 2426, Common Goldeneye 304, Barrow's Goldeneye 14 (13 Lake Merritt; 1 Peyton party, North Boat), Bufflehead 398, White-winged Scoter 161, Surf Scoter 6142, Common Scoter 1 (South Boat), Ruddy Duck 3287, Hooded Merganser 1 (Alameda Golf Course), Common Merganser 16, Red-breasted Merganser 68, Gadwall 5 (2 Upper San Leandro Reservoir, 3 Oakland Airport), Duck spp. 2.

Turkey Vulture 43, White-tailed Kite 4 (1 Alameda Golf Course, 3 Oakland Airport), Sharp-shinned Hawk 32, Cooper's Hawk 12, Red-tailed Hawk 88, Golden Eagle 3 (2 Sproul and Southworth parties along Oakland ridges, 1 Lafayette Reservoir), Marsh Hawk 5, **Osprey** 1 (Upper San Leandro Reservoir), Merlin 2 (1 Johnsen party, El Toyonal area, Orinda; 1 Morlan party Alameda Dump area), American Kestrel 95, California Quail 830, Ring-necked Pheasant 16, Clapper Rail 18, Virginia Rail 5 (3 parties), Sora Rail 5 (4 parties), **Common Gallinule** 1 (Alameda Golf Course), American Coot 2453, Semi-palmated Plover 214, Snowy Plover 24, Killdeer 390, Black-bellied Plover 1034, Ruddy Turnstone 25, Black Turnstone 42, Common Snipe 29, Long-billed Curlew 132, Whimbrel 11, Spotted Sandpiper 11, **Wandering Tattler** 1 (seen by both North Boat and Berkeley waterfront parties), Willet 2802, Greater Yellowlegs 18, Red Knot 181, Least Sandpiper 1318, Dunlin 6871, Short-billed Dowitcher 678, Long-billed Dowitcher 1336, Dowitcher spp. 489, Western Sandpiper 10,247, Marbled Godwit 1896, Sanderling 619, American Avocet 2620, Black-necked Stilt 61.

Glaucous-winged Gull 3488, Western Gull 2462, Herring Gull 180, Thayer's Gull 105, California Gull 2886, Ring-billed Gull 1544, Mew Gull 408, Bonaparte's Gull 173, Heermann's Gull 1 (North Boat), **Black-legged Kittiwake** 1 (Berkeley waterfront), Gull spp. 2965, Forster's Tern 139, Common Murre 1 (North Boat), Band-tailed Pigeon 421, Rock Dove 917, Mourning Dove 1691, Barn Owl 1 (Gomke in Redwood Park), Screech Owl 5 (4 parties), Great Horned Owl 25, Pygmy Owl 4 (all at Upper San Leandro Reservoir), Burrowing Owl 25, Short-eared Owl 1 (Berkeley waterfront; habitat declining here), Saw-whet Owl 3 (2 by Gomke; 1 by Alton, Pinehurst Canyon), Anna's Hummingbird 305, Belted Kingfisher 17, Common Flicker (Red-shafted) 468, Acorn Wood-

pecker 40, Red-breasted Sapsucker 13, Hairy Woodpecker 3 (3 parties), Downy Woodpecker 25, Nuttall's Woodpecker 26, Black Phoebe 43, Say's Phoebe 13, Horned Lark 16, Steller's Jay 597, Scrub Jay 886, **Common Raven 2** (Morrow party, Moraga Valley; Mans party, Redwood Park south), Common Crow 83, Chestnut-backed Chickadee 740, Plain Titmouse 173, Common Bushtit 1149, White-breasted Nuthatch 23, Red-breasted Nuthatch 33, Brown Creeper 33, Wrentit 477.

Winter Wren 40, Bewick's Wren 93, Long-billed Marsh Wren 1 (Lafayette Reservoir), Rock Wren 3 (Southworth party, the quarries), Mockingbird 98, California Thrasher 24, American Robin 2011, Varied Thrush 74 (versus 1637 in 1977), Hermit Thrush 153, Western Bluebird 146, Golden-crowned Kinglet 47, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 469, Water Pipit 165, Cedar Waxwing 667, Loggerhead Shrike 24, Starling 4761, Hutton's Vireo 23, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) 43, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) 77, Yellow-rumped Warbler spp. 473, Townsend's Warbler 18, House Sparrow 789.

Western Meadowlark 391, Red-winged Blackbird 1196, Tri-colored Blackbird 77 (76 Alameda Dump, 1 Oakland Airport), Brewer's Blackbird 882, Brown-headed Cowbird 32, Purple Finch 43, House Finch 1825, Pine Siskin 117, American Goldfinch 241, Lesser Goldfinch 466, Rufous-sided Towhee 306, Brown Towhee 1154, Savannah Sparrow 159, Lark Sparrow 8 (4 Sproul party, Indian Valley; 4 Palsson party, Upper San Leandro Reservoir), Rufous-crowned Sparrow 13 (5 parties), Dark-eyed Junco (Slate) 12 (3 parties including 10 by Hirt party, Knowland Park), Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) 2226, White-crowned Sparrow 1679, Golden-crowned Sparrow 2114, White-throated Sparrow 1 (Kesseli feeder, Kensington), Fox Sparrow 336, Lincoln's Sparrow 11, Song Sparrow 327.

Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, February 10 — Sacramento Valley. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the south end of Thornton (25 miles north of Stockton). Thornton may be reached via Hwy. 160 or Hwy. 99. Allow at least 1½ hours driving time from the Bay Area. From Thornton we will caravan to see Sandhill Cranes, Whistling Swans, assorted waterfowl and raptors common to the Valley. We may encounter muddy roads. Bring lunch to eat at Micki's Grove. Leader: Paul Covel (530-2513). (✓)

Sunday, February 11 — Pelagic trip on Monterey Bay. See January *Gull* for details.

Saturday, February 17 — Inspiration Point to San Pablo Dam Reservoir. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Inspiration Point parking lot. Take Hwy. 24 east through the Caldecott Tunnel to the Orinda exit. Turn left at the signal onto Camino Pablo. After 2.3 miles turn left onto Wildcat Canyon Rd. for about 1.5 miles to Inspiration Point parking lot. We will hike downhill 2 or 3 miles to the reservoir to see birds in varied habitat; the ponds resulting from the draining of the reservoir seem to attract shorebirds. We will ride back up to the parking lot. Bring lunch. Leaders: Sue and Bob Watson (254-4077). (✓)

Wednesday, February 21 — Palo Alto Baylands Environmental Center for shorebirds, ducks, gulls and rails. Take Hwy. 101 to Embarcadero exit and go east to the Center at the end of the road. Meet at 9:30 a.m. Tides are right. Bring lunch. Leader: Mary Keoham (632-5176). (✓)

Wednesday, February 21 — Mini trip to Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary for ducks and shorebirds and the possibility of seeing the Western Grebes' courtship dance. After the walk there will be a brief tour of the restored Victorian Lyford House which is part of the sanctuary. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Beach Rd., Tiburon. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 north to the Belvedere-Tiburon exit; go east and turn right at the third traffic light - Greenwood Beach Rd. Lunch optional. Leader: Phil Schaeffer. Info: Hap Fraser (661-8891).

Saturday, February 24 — Los Banos State Refuge. Meet at 9 a.m. at the refuge headquarters located 3 miles north of Los Banos on the Henry Miller Rd. Allow 2½ to 3 hours driving time from the Bay Area. We will look for White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes and assorted waterfowl. Bring lunch. Leaders: Dolores and Peter White (339-9234). (✓)

Sunday, February 25 — Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. See Wednesday, February 21, for directions and program. Meet at 9 a.m. Bring lunch. If it's raining there will be an indoor program. Leader: Phil Schaeffer (388-2524).

Saturday, March 3 — Tennessee Valley. Meet at 9 a.m. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 to the Mill Valley exit under the Richardson Bay Bridge and in one-half mile turn left at the Tennessee Valley sign. Drive to the end of the road, about a mile. We will walk on a flat trail to see land and water birds. Bring lunch. Leader Betty Short (921-3020 during work hours). (✓)

Sunday, March 4 — Audubon Canyon Ranch brainstorming session. Do you like to discover the new and experience the unexpected? Are you interested in exploring bird life at little known places? Do you

know of a good spot for birds but think you don't know enough about them to find out what's there? If you answered any of these questions affirmatively you may like to help us plan our Discovery Trips. These are outings more akin to the original spirit of a field trip—a trip to find out what's there rather than to be told what others have seen before.

Such trips might include visits to Angel Island or Alcatraz, the Tuolumne River Canyon below Hetch Hetchy Dam, Ft. Ross or somewhere only you know about. You are invited to share your ideas and help us plan these trips at a brainstorming session at Audubon Canyon Ranch organized by the Field Trip Committee. Bring a lunch and meet us for a picnic between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The birding on Bolinas Lagoon should be good and the resident birds should be returning to the area. The Ranch is located on Hwy. 1 about 3 miles north of Stinson Beach. (✓)

Carpooling: The trips marked (✓) are those for which carpooling arrangements will be handled. If you care to take riders or want a ride call Kate Partridge at 642-5784, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. If she's not available leave a message and she will contact you. Passengers should be willing to share all gas and fees incident to the trip.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

December Observations - Through December 29

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

I need to receive your reports by the termination date for each month (usually between the 26th and 29th) because I write each column shortly after this date to meet the first-of-the-month deadline for *The Gull*. For example, a Dec. 20 observation not reported until Dec. 30 could not appear on schedule in the February *Gull*; I would include it in the March *Gull* (January Observations) only if it were especially noteworthy.

LATE FALL ON THE FARALLONES

A summary (provided by Dan Taylor) of Point Reyes Bird Observatory's October and November observations on the Farallon Islands adds a **Canada Warbler** on Oct. 25, **Least Flycatcher** and **Brown Thrasher** Oct. 26 and **Black-throated Green Warbler** Oct. 27. November brought the first Farallon records of Great Horned Owl (Nov. 4) and Whistling Swan, a flock of ten on Nov. 11. These ten swans could have included *two* new species for the Islands, because this flock was probably the same ten swans seen flying southeast over Lake Merced the same day,

one of which was a Trumpeter Swan (JM, *et al.*)! Vagrancy in Acorn Woodpeckers continued as a female reached the Islands Nov. 25.

WATERBIRDS

The Laysan Albatross is much rarer in California than the Black-footed Albatross with which it shares Pacific breeding islands, but it is also "prettier." Thus the occasional Laysan found at or near a major port is presumably the victim of a sailor who wanted a "gooney" pet until his albatross became too much to bear. A white albatross, presumably a Laysan, found standing on the Berkeley Marina Dec. 26 (BSe), disappeared before it could be rescued. By Dec. 3 many Northern Fulmars had reached Pacific Grove (EH). Pink-footed Shearwaters are common in the warmer months, but two at Point Pinos, Pacific Grove, Dec. 28 (RS, BSa) were late. Conversely, the Manx Shearwater, when present at all is an October-December tubenose. Two Manx were at Point Pinos Dec. 3 (EH) and 29 were there Dec. 28 (RS, BSa), with another off the Monterey Peninsula the same day (AB).

Cattle Egrets became too numerous to detail, with over 60 reported from all sections of the Bay Area. Most impressive was the group of 35 with cattle in Fremont (EM, AM), presumably the same flock of 22 to 32 roosting nightly in nearby Lake Elizabeth (PH, *et al.*). Most bizarre was the one attempting to join the captive Cattle Egrets in the flight cage at Lake Merritt Dec. 13 (JR, *et al.*)! Eurasian Wigeons were also widely reported. Rarely, a lone Ross' Goose startles observers on the coast. What better place for this phenomenon is there than Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove (Dec. 28 - RS)? The **Tufted Duck** was last seen on Lake Merritt Dec. 18 or 19 (BC), but the Muddy Hollow individual remained in the Limantour area through this writing (JM, mob).

Mountain Plovers inhabited typical Central Valley and Panoche Valley sites, but one by the Hall Ranch, Point Reyes, Dec. 16 through this writing (DE, mob), was unexpected. Two American Golden Plovers remained in Point Reyes fields through the month (mob). On Dec. 9 another Golden Plover visited a less usual location, Doolittle Pond, Bay Farm Island (LF, *et al.*). A Surfbird Dec. 23 on gravel, mud and the pipes where the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct dips under San Francisco Bay in Fremont appears to be the first South Bay record (SFB). Pillar Point, Princeton Harbor, continues to be favored by Rock Sandpiper, with one there Nov. 30. An immature Black-legged Kittiwake at the south Berkeley shore Dec. 17 was an excellent find inside the Bay (SW). Almost unknown in Central California for over a decade, the **Royal Tern** at Point Pinos Dec. 15 (TC, DP) was nevertheless seasonal. Two (different?) Tufted Puffins at Point Pinos Dec. 28 (RS, BSa) represent a species very rarely seen from shore during the winter.

LANDBIRDS

The Broad-winged Hawk at the mouth of the Carmel River stayed at least through Dec. 3 (EM, AM). Another was in Inverness at least Dec. 15-27 (RS, DDeS, DE, *et al.*). Calaveras Reservoir seems to be the most reliable Bay Area spot for Bald Eagles; two adults and two immatures spent December there (mob). Small groups of Lewis' Woodpeckers have settled down for the winter in three new sites in north-eastern Marin County (DMcC, GA, MS) and near Crystal Springs Reservoir (DL, AH). One of the Foster City Tropical Kingbirds remained at least through Dec. 9 (mob, HW). A Yellow-billed Magpie at Tennessee Cove, Marin County, found Oct. 1 (JS) and seen sporadically through Dec. 13, may be the same one observed at nearby Rodeo Lagoon Oct. 21 and Nov. 6. Similarly at a strange location, and rather late too, was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Lake Merritt Dec. 13 (JR, *et al.*).

Two Palm Warblers at Point Pinos Dec. 3 (EH) and one at the mouth of the Garcia River Dec. 15 (JC) likely were late migrants. At the mouth of the Carmel River, the Nashville Warbler and Wilson's Warbler stayed through the Monterey Christmas Count Dec. 28 (*fide* RS), but the **Lucy's Warbler**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Black-and-white Warbler** and **American Redstart** were all last reported Dec. 3 (EM, AM). Pacific Grove was more productive on Dec. 28, with two **Black-and-white Warblers** (RS), a "Bullock's" **Northern Oriole** (RS) and a **Western Tanager** (LI). The fall **Stinson Beach Black-and-white Warbler** was refound Nov. 27 (PP). The male **Hooded Warbler** at Muir Woods at least through Dec. 16 (*fide* NPS) drew much attention, but the male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Auburn through Dec. 12 (JL) is hardly less spectacular. Will either be able to winter? The **Great-tailed Grackle** seems capable of continuing at the Palace of Fine Arts; despite secretive behavior it was detected as late as Dec. 8 (*fide* HW).

Palo Alto Baylands' **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was flushed by the very high tide of Dec. 29 (MW). This seems to be a poor winter for **Swamp Sparrows**. Up to 21 **Lapland Longspurs** accompanied the larks in the Hall Ranch fields Dec. 16-29 (GA, DE, mob, JM). Three **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** were also present Dec. 16 (DE) and two remained to Dec. 23 (mob). Almost a month after being discovered, the **Snow Bunting** at MacKerricher State Park was last reported Dec. 9 (EM, AM).

"THE" BIRD

As in October, December's hot spot was the field south of the Hall Ranch buildings. Great excitement spread as a bird found Dec. 16 by Dick Erickson was subsequently identified by virtually every viewing expert as a **Smith's Longspur**. The exception was Laurence C. Binford,

who proved his contention that the bird was actually a lark. Since Dec. 20 it has been correctly identified as a **Common Skylark**, the first non-Alaskan record for North America, except for the introduced population at Victoria, British Columbia, and San Juan Island, Washington. Although its racial identity and origin are under discussion, the majority opinion is that this Skylark is not from the introduced stock. It is still present as I write (mob, JM). On a personal note, it is quite humbling to see one's 600th ABA Area life bird as a Smith's Longspur on Tuesday, lose it on Wednesday and see the same bird as number 600 as a singing Common Skylark on Thursday!

Errata: Two observations were omitted in press from page 4 of the January issue. The comments will make more sense if they are restored. Tufted Duck observations should read "a female at Rodeo Lagoon Nov. 11 (DB, DMcC, mob), a male present on Lake Merritt since Nov. 11 (HC, mob) and joined by a second male Nov. 23 (HC) and a male at the large Muddy Hollow pond near Limantour Nov. 23 (GGAS)." The third of four Oldsquaw observations should have been "Sears Point Road, Solano County (an unusual location), Nov. 17 (KVV)."

Observers: Garth Alton, Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Baldridge, Laurence C. Binford, George Canning, Ted Chandik, Jim Clayton, Bill Clow, Herold Connon, Dave DeSante, Joe Eaton, Dick Erickson, Leora Feeney, Doug Gomke, Ed Greaves, Helen Green, Ed Harper, Pat Hayes, Alan Hopkins, Lloyd Ingles, Dick Johnson, Jeri Langham, Donna Lion, Akiko Makishima, Eugene Makishima, many observers (mob), Dianne McClung, Joe Morlan, National Park Service, Dennis Parker, John Parmeter, Peter Paton, Jean Richmond, Barry Sauppe (BSa), Jane Schmidt, Don Schmoldt, Barry Seelye (BSe), Malcolm Sproul, Rich Stallcup (RS), Ron Sullivan, Harry White, Mike Wihler, Summer Wilson.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*
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Birding Golden Gate Park

PART 1

San Francisco's Golden Gate Park is among the finest urban parks in the world. It is wholly man made except for land forms such as Strawberry Hill. Among its many fine features are extensive plantings of Monterey Pine, Monterey Cypress and several eucalyptus species, an

interesting and varied avifauna and the exhibits and collections of the California Academy of Sciences.

Conceptually, the Park is divided into two parts, the developed area east of Crossover Drive and the less developed area west of it. Generally speaking, the western "wildscape" provides the best birding habitats, though there are many fine spots in the eastern part of the Park.

A variety of problems now face the Park which may affect birding. Water seeps from many of the lakes almost as fast as it can be pumped into them. We can anticipate that these lakes will be drained and sealed at some point in the future. Bulrushes and other pond weeds have formed marshes in North Lake and Middle Lake. The Recreation and Park Department has considered the removal of these plants. At some point their continued spread will be checked. The forest in the western wildscape is considered to have reached its climax and plans for reforestation are being formulated. For those who use and enjoy the Park for birding these are conservation issues. Golden Gate Park will necessarily undergo changes in coming years. The extent of those changes can be influenced by Park visitors who inform the Recreation and Park Department of their observation and views by writing: General Manager, Golden Gate Park, McLaren Lodge, Fell and Stanyan streets, San Francisco, CA 94117. Sightings of rare or unusual birds, such as eastern vagrants and species more generally seen in the interior, should be reported the same day to Dr. Laurence Binford at the California Academy of Science, 221-5100, Ext. 276.

THE EASTERN DEVELOPED AREA —

STANYAN STREET TO CROSSOVER DRIVE

The Fuschia Garden (#1), located on Conservatory Drive East, provides excellent habitat for Allen's Hummingbirds in spring and summer. Anna's Hummingbirds are present all year. Sparrows, finches and Scrub Jays are also permanent residents. The oak grove (#2), east of this area, is said to have records for migrants uncommon to the City, but generally speaking, both areas are rather slow and the number of species likely to be seen is limited.

The Rhododendron Dell (#3) is located east of the Academy of Science and south of Kennedy Drive and 6th Avenue. During the fall it has been known to attract a variety of vagrants and migrants. Empidonax Flycatchers occur here regularly in fall as do Olive-sided Flycatchers and Western Wood Pewees. Be sure to watch the "pigeons" in this area because they are not all Rock Doves. A large flock of Band-tailed Pigeons can frequently be seen in the Monterey Pines and Cypress over the rhododendrons. This is probably the most regular spot in the Park for that species.

There are other dells and groves in this area which may or may not be productive birding sites, but they are not birded with enough regularity to merit discussion here.

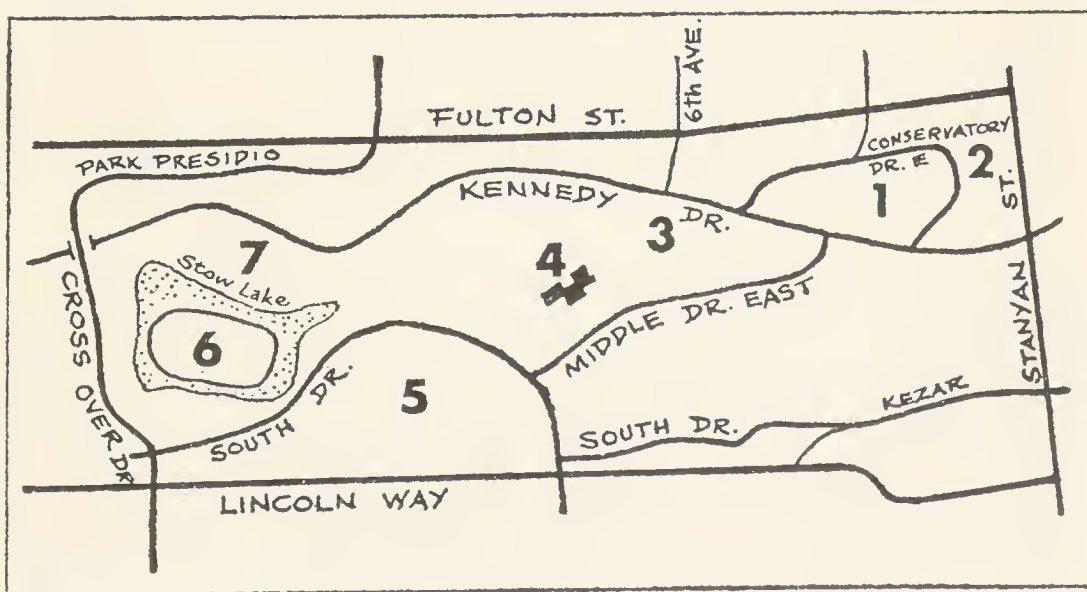
While in the area be sure to stop at the California Academy of Science (#4). There, one may see dioramas of California bird habitats as well as a collection of stuffed birds likely to be seen in somewhat better conditions outside the confines of the museum.

Strybing Arboretum

Strybing Arboretum (#5) is by far the most diverse plant community in the Park. From its beginning under the direction of John McLaren and Eric Walther in 1937, the Arboretum has not only housed an excellent botanical exhibit but has offered interesting birding as well. Check the pond near the entrance across the street from the Japanese Tea Garden for a European Wigeon during the winter. The pond generally has an interesting flock of ducks, geese and swans, many of which are exotics. To my knowledge, there is no best way to bird the Arboretum. Just find a path and follow it. There is a large population of California Quail here; in fact, it is probably the surest place in the Park to find them. Rufous-sided Towhees seem to favor it as well. Listen for flocks of chickadees, bushtits and kinglets because Hermit and Townsend's Warblers may be found with them.

Stow Lake

Stow Lake (#6) is probably the most widely used lake in the Park. The walk around it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. The island in the middle is accessible by two bridges. A dirt path circles it and winds its way to



the top. A small snack bar and boat rental facility are located at the northwest corner of the lake. Restrooms are available here.

Check the area around the concession for gulls and ducks. Ring-necked Ducks may be seen here in winter. A large flock of Brewer's Blackbirds inhabits the small island near this area. Walk east until the road straightens out and check the eucalyptus trees across the street for any of a variety of birds including fall migrants such as Western Tanagers and various warblers. Since this area is seldom birded, there is no telling what might show up. In January 1978, a Tennessee Warbler was found here. (See the section on Pioneer Log Cabin (#7) for further information.) Continue to check the row of trees until the road turns to the right. The trail leading down the hill goes to the Japanese Tea Garden. The flock of ducks at this point on the lake generally includes Mallards, American Wigeons, Lesser Scaups and Ruddy Ducks. A Tufted Duck wintered in this area in 1972. As you continue around the lake listen for the common birds which inhabit this and all other areas of the Park. Among others you may hear Belted Kingfisher, Scrub Jay and Common Flicker.

Once the area between Strawberry Hill and Prayerbook Cross to the north was a rock quarry which provided much of the material used in street construction in the City. The collapsed Huntington Falls on the northeast side of the island and the few remaining palm trees are reminders of the Victorian era which saw construction of structures such as the Conservatory and events such as the Midwinter Fair of 1894. Presently, a movement is afoot to reconstruct the falls, several palms have been planted to restore an image of times past and temporary bulwarks have been constructed to curtail erosion. During the fall, winter and spring the island is home for a large number of sparrows and juncos. Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds reside on the island and Scrub Jays can usually be found here. During the fall, migrants seem to be attracted to the island. Recent sightings of Acorn Woodpeckers and other species rare on the coast, but common inland, suggest that Strawberry Hill could be an interesting and productive birding site.

Adjacent to Stow Lake is the Pioneer Log Cabin (#7), which is situated on the edge of a meadow with a nice picnic area and excellent birding habitat. Not only do the trees here change with the seasons, but with light and wind and fog, this is one of the most visually attractive locations in the Park. Besides a wonderful variety of migrants such as Western Tanager, Wilson's and Yellow Warbler and Western Flycatcher, various vagrants such as American Redstart, Blackpoll Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler were seen here in the fall of 1978. This certainly seems to be a spot which attracts great enough variety of birds to merit extensive birding. Walk behind the cabin and follow the dirt paths

which follow the contour of the hill. To date the most productive area has been the hillside behind the picnic area, but similar habitat exists along the south edge of the meadow for its entire length.

—DAN MURPHY©

Conservation Notes

RARE II RIPOFF. The Department of Agriculture has proposed to Congress that over a third of untouched roadless national forestland in California under study for possible wilderness preservation be made available for development. Of a total of 6.2 million acres under consideration in the state only 899,000 acres of "mainly rocks and ice" to quote James Eaton of Wilderness Society, were recommended as permanently protected wilderness; 2.65 million were proposed for additional study and a huge 2.5 million acres should now be made available for timber cutting, mining, livestock grazing and ski areas, according to the Department. Nationwide more than half of the total 62 million roadless acres under study was recommended for development.

The Forest Service, which handled the survey, received more than a quarter million pieces of mail containing 360,000 signatures — the largest response to any impact statement ever—during the summer public comment period on the RARE II (roadless area evaluation) draft environmental impact statement. Responses ranged from thoughtful statements from individuals to mass response forms prompted by organized anti-wilderness campaigns.

Despite early indications of some ballot box stuffing and coercive tactics by development interests, public support for wilderness was reportedly high. In light of the public survey results, the Department's recommendations seem highly unbalanced and development oriented. The national forestlands belong to all the American people and we feel they shouldn't be given away to special interests.

NEW RIPARIAN HOPE. Governor Brown has signed into law the Riparian Forest Study Bill which will provide \$150,000 to study riparian habitat along designated water courses in the Great Central Valley, the Tulare Basin and the California Desert. The study will hopefully form the basis of future management plans to protect California's vanishing riparian resource, ideal habitat for many species of native wildlife.

CALIFORNIA BOBCAT POPULATION HIGH. A recent survey of state bobcat populations by the Department of Fish and Game has turned up evidence that the animal is healthy and flourishing throughout

most of California. The survey was prompted by a recent proposal to consider the cat endangered. According to a Department spokesman 93 percent of California land is potential bobcat habitat because they are found on grasslands and agricultural lands, below sea level and above 11,000 feet, and in twelve of the thirteen major wildlife habitat types listed in the state. A density study undertaken by DFG biologists in an area near El Cajon, in San Diego county, turned up an incredible ratio of three to four cats per square mile, higher than any previous level reported in the literature. The Department has concluded that overall the California bobcat is in very good condition and under present regulations is not threatened.

SOUTH SF BAY REFUGE EXPANSION. The South Bay Wildlife Refuge has taken over management of 15,000 acres of salt evaporation ponds pending purchase of the land from Leslie Salt and inclusion in the refuge, which will eventually comprise 23,000 acres of marsh, mud-flats, open water and salt ponds. Construction of a headquarters and visitors center at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge will start next spring, with a network of trails out into the wetlands and continually around the South Bay, connecting with already existing trails in the Coyote Hills East Bay Regional Park and other areas. Opening date for the Refuge Center is April, 1979.

EMERYVILLE TRAIL CANCELLED. The East Bay Regional Parks people have temporarily shelved plans for a biking and hiking trail around the Emeryville Crescent and have transferred the proposed funds to another project. The trail as originally planned would have followed along much of the East Bay waterfront, but the Emeryville Crescent segment of the proposed trail — near the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza — would have severely affected the considerable birdlife that survives in the fragile habitat there.

GOLDEN GATE PARK PLAN OUT. The plan for Golden Gate Park, now available, makes very interesting reading. To receive a copy call 558-3182 or write: The Plan, S.F. Recreation & Park Dept., McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94117. All interested GGAS members are urged to read the plan and attend the public hearings (inquire above for dates).

—CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Farallon Islands Trips

GGAS will sponsor boat trips to circle the Farallon Islands on Sunday, April 22, and Sunday, May 6. Participants will have an opportunity to view nesting and migrating seabirds, many of which are sighted only occasionally from the mainland. Past trips have produced sightings of

Tufted Puffins, shearwaters, albatross and several species of marine mammals.

Reservations can be made by sending \$16 per person with a self-addressed stamped envelope to GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. Checks should be made payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Space for the trips is limited and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

Birding Classes in San Francisco

Joe Morlan's popular birding classes will be offered again through the Galileo-Marina Community College in San Francisco. The beginning class starts Thursday, February 8; the intermediate class begins Tuesday, February 6, and the advanced class starts Wednesday, February 7.

Each class meets weekly from 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. in room 254 of the Marina Middle School located at the corner of Fillmore and Bay streets. Classes will continue for 18 weeks until the second week of June. There is ample free parking in the lot just east of the school off Bay Street.

All evening classes will be offered *free of charge* to residents of San Francisco. Non-residents will be charged tuition of \$45 per semester. Optional field trips may be arranged on weekends to observe wild birds in their natural habitats for an additional fee of \$24 for a program of eight half-day trips.

The beginning class is designed primarily for those who have no previous birding experience but would like to learn the many common birds found in the Bay Area. The intermediate class continues with a systematic treatment of water birds found in California, beginning with loons. The advanced program deals primarily with land birds. Both are suitable for those who wish to sharpen their field identification skills.

All classes feature illustrative wild bird slides.

To register, simply come to the first class for the course you wish to take. For further information call the college at 931-3595.

GGAS 1979 Madagascar - Tanzania Trip

We regret that the Madagascar portion of this trip has been cancelled. Don Turner, leader of the tour, has just informed us that travel accommodations in Madagascar have fallen below minimum standards and will not improve by the time of our scheduled trip.

In place of Madagascar we will add Kenya and the Seychelles Islands to our itinerary. Tanzania will still be part of the trip and the dates, July 22 to August 10, 1979, should remain the same. Adding Kenya

should increase the wildlife that we see and the Seychelles offer a number of endemic species of birds.

For more information contact Forum Travel at 843-8294 in Berkeley or Mike Wihler at 664-6567 in San Francisco.

—EXTENDED FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

PRBO Natural Excursions for 1979

Point Reyes Bird Observatory has released the schedule for its 1979 excursions. For complete information write to Bob Stewart, PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.

Birds of Costa Rica with Bill Clow: February 15-March 1.

Birds of Guatemala-Tikal with Bill Clow: March 9-24.

Birds and Whales in Baja California with Diane Williams: March 13-April 21.

Owls of California with Bill Clow: May 18-20.

Owls of Northern California with Bill Clow: May 25-27.

Birds and Mammals of the Gulf of the Farallones with Ron LeValley: May 6 or June 3 (two trips).

Bird Song - Sierra Nevada with Bob Stewart and Marie Mans: June 1-3.

Transect of California with Bob Stewart and Janine Haller: June 12-21.

Birds of the High Sierra with Bob Stewart: June 25-29.

Birds and the Natural History of Southeast Arizona with Rich Stallcup and Peter Warshall: July 26-August 2.

Birds of Ecuador with Paul Greenfield and Bob Stewart: July 31-August 21.

Birds of Monterey Bay with Rich Stallcup: August 25-26, October 27-28.

Bird Migration at Humboldt Bay with Bill Clow: September 7-9.

Owls of California - Carmel Valley with Bill Clow: September 21-23.

Special Bird Identification Workshop with Rich Stallcup: November 3-4.

Birds of San Blas, Mexico with Arthur Earle and Bob Stewart: November 16-24 or December 21-29 (two trips).

East Bay Environmental Education Program

GGAS will soon be launching a new East Bay environmental education program for elementary school children similar to the Bay Shore Study Program now available in San Francisco. Guided field trips to Lake Merritt and possible other areas will be offered to children in grades 4-8. The main focus of the field trips will be the study of migration of waterfowl and the importance of wildlife refuges.

Volunteers are needed to be group leaders and aides to group leaders. Adults of all ages are urged to participate. All that is needed is a willingness to work with young people and some free time, either morning or afternoon. Volunteers will receive instructions and materials before any field trips are taken. Two or more volunteers will lead trips together depending on the number of young people.

For more information please contact Marty Morrow at 832-7141 or the GGAS office, 843-2222.

—EDUCATION COMMITTEE

It's an Owl!

Budget cuts in the aftermath of the passage of the Jarvis Initiative have resulted in Walnut Creek's Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum embarking on an unusual program. Concerned and interested people are being asked to "adopt" one of the many creatures housed at the museum — in other words, to pay for their upkeep — for a minimum of one month to a maximum of one year.

GGAS has agreed to adopt "Chain," a Saw-whet Owl, for one year at a cost of \$84. Others needing adoption include "Jasper," a raccoon, "Willard," a Great Horned Owl, "Mr. Clean," a White-tailed Kite, "Julius Squeezer," an Indian python, and "Jeremiah," a bullfrog.

For more information on the program and how you can help, contact the Museum, 1901 First Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94596 (935-1978).

Alaskan Adventure

The San Francisco Zoological Society is offering a unique wildlife excursion into Alaska, an 18-day adventure that starts with a visit to the highly regarded Vancouver Aquarium and Zoo, then on to Prince Rupert, Juneau, overnight aboard ship on Glacier Bay, to Anchorage, King Salmon, Katmai, Camp Denali in McKinley Park and the Pribilof Islands. This great North American wilderness affords an unusual travel experience; the summer season tour is especially developed to study natural history, the flora and fauna of one of the last great wilderness areas. For information call the Zoological Society office at 661-2026.

New Books Received by GGAS Library

A Guide to North American Bird Clubs, by John E. Rickert, Avian Publications, Inc. Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 1978.

North American Ducks, Geese & Swans, by Donald S. Heintzelman, Winchester Press, N.Y., 1978

Ornithology in Laboratory and Field, by Olin Seawall Pettingill, Jr., Fourth Ed., Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, Minn., 1970

Sourcebook on the Environment, by Kenneth A. Hammond, Ed., University of Chicago Press, 1978.

To Save a Whale - The Voyages of Greenpeace, by Robert Hunter, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA, 1978. (See book review below)

Vanishing Birds, by Tim Halliday, Holt, Rinehart, Winston, N.Y., 1978

To Save a Whale - The Voyages of Greenpeace, by Robert Hunter and Rex Weyler. A Canadian mission to protest the nuclear activity at Amchitka in 1971 became the pressure group Greenpeace. Composed of people who felt the obligation to act, their guerrilla action began to focus world attention against the needless slaughter of the whales.

New to the GGAS library, this 119-page well-illustrated volume recounts the frustrations and rewards of three Greenpeace voyages. In April, 1975, a multi-national crew set out in an 80-foot limited range halibut seiner for an encounter off the California coast with a Soviet factory ship and its killer boats. The Greenpeace crew was able to document on film the killing of undersize whales. The crew, riding in rubber Zodiac rafts, placed their bodies between the Russian harpoons and a pod of whales and had the satisfaction of saving eight of the whales.

With a converted minesweeper able to keep pace with their adversaries and an intelligence network to help spot whalers in the vast Pacific, the 1976 mission was able to save up to 90 whales in four direct confrontations. Many more were saved because the glare of public attention on the whalers' activities deterred them from some of their usual hunting.

By the summer of 1977 three Greenpeace expeditions were under way. Two of the groups actually boarded Russian ships to explain their mission to the crews and hand out buttons and literature.

It is the earnest hope of all who participated in these voyages, as well as all whale conscious people, that the killing will end while there are still enough whales left to survive.

—SHIRLEY TAYLOR

VOLUNTEER SOUGHT

Vera Paraschak, GGAS Executive Director, is seeking a volunteer coordinator to work with her and Board members to organize, coordinate and train volunteer workers in the GGAS office. This position requires a commitment of ten hours a week from someone able to work well with people. If you are interested or want more specifics, please contact Vera by calling 843-2222, dropping by the office or writing a short letter.

Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology

The ninth annual Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology will be held May 3-6, 1979, at the Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum west of Superior, Arizona. The Institute involves 60 participants in field studies of the Sonoran Desert. Under the leadership of six professional staff members, participants explore and study the interrelationships of earth and life forms. Boyce Thompson Arboretum is located at the base of Picket Post Mountain. It is situated along intermittent Queen Creek which allows for ideal desert and riparian study. All meals during the Institute are catered and participants have a choice of dormitory style sleeping accommodations or camping facilities. The Institute is open to all adults 18 and over who need not be members of the Audubon Society to attend. For registration or brochure, write Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology, 1642 North Westridge Avenue, Tuscon, AZ 85705.

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Memorial and honorary gifts and bequests will be used as specified by the donors. Acknowledgement will be made in *The Gull* and personally by the Corresponding Secretary, Minnie Groshong. Please send checks made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society to: Corresponding Secretary, GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California 94705. All gifts are tax deductible.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$18 per year (individual); \$21 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$4 per year; single issues 40¢. High school and college student membership \$13.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, \$13.50, senior citizen family, \$15.50.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month.